

**Wichita-Sedgwick County
Metropolitan Planning Organization**

**Public Involvement Tool
Box**

A working document.

Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan Planning Organization

Public Involvement Tool Box

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Purpose.....	1
Coordination with PIP.....	1
Public Meetings	1
Measuring Effectiveness	1
Components	1
Programs	2
Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) Adoption/Update.....	2
Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Adoption/Update.....	5
Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)	7
Environmental Justice.....	7
Americans with Disabilities.....	8
Notification for public comment and participation activities	8
Public involvement participants and interested parties.....	8
Public Access.....	1
Public Involvement Techniques.....	1
MPO Web Site	1
MPO Master Database	1
Legal Advertisements	1
MPO Newsletter.....	1
Display Ads.....	1
Project-specific Flyers	1
Direct Mailings	1
Press Releases	1
TV Message Board Announcements	1
Project Workshops/Open-Houses	1
Small Group Meetings	1
E-mail Contact	1
Citizen's Advisory Committees	1
Fact Sheets	2
Public Hearings.....	2
Comment Forms.....	2
Surveys.....	2
Posters and Flyers	2

Public Involvement Tool Box

Introduction

Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan Planning Boundaries include all the cities within Sedgwick County, and the cities of Andover and Mulvane in Sumner and Butler Counties. The MPO is committed to a comprehensive and inclusive approach by involving the citizens of these communities in developing transportation plans and programs.

Purpose

The Public Involvement Tool Box describes ways to involve members of the community in the transportation process. The Tool Box outlines opportunities and provide timely information about transportation issues and processes to citizens, affected public agencies, transportation agencies, private providers of transportation, other interested parties and segments of the community affected by transportation plans, programs and projects (including but not limited to central city and other local jurisdiction concerns). This document also addresses how the MPO will comply with federally mandated requirements for public involvement including Environmental Justice concerns.

Coordination with PIP

As a guide to implementing the MPO Public Involvement Policy, outlined in this document are procedures and processes that can be used to develop project appropriate public involvement processes. Time frames and activities listed are minimum requirements, but may not be the rule. When possible and feasible, activities such as comment and review periods may be increased in time and scope.

Public Meetings

To ensure communities in the MPO area are aware, educated, and given the opportunity to be involved in the transportation planning process, the Technical Advisory Committee, the Coordinating Committee on Transportation Planning, and the Metropolitan Planning Organization meetings are open to the public. Members of the community are encouraged to speak. Meetings will be held at locations that comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Measuring Effectiveness

Built into the PIP is an evaluation of the activities to assure they are effective in getting information out to the public and getting feedback on programs and projects. The activities listed in this document will be used as measurements of success in terms of effectiveness in assuring the process provides full and open access to all.

Components

The following table outlines the minimum requirements for public involvement plans and programs.

	Legal Notice	Comment Period and Public meeting	Summary and Disposition of Comments
PIP	1) Local and Area Wide Newspapers. 2) Clerk's Office of Towns and Small Cities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 45-Day comment period prior to adoption. • Public comment opportunity at every TAC, Coordinating Committee and Policy Board meetings. 	Summary of significant comments provided to the TAC, MAPC, and in the final document.
TIP		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14-Day comment period prior to adoption. • Public comment opportunity at every TAC, and Policy Board meetings. 	
LRTP		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14-Day comment period prior to adoption. • Public comment opportunity at every TAC, Coordinating Committee and Policy Board meetings. 	
UPWP		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14-Day comment period prior to adoption. • Public comment opportunity at every TAC, Coordinating Committee and Policy Board meetings. 	
Other, MIS		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14-Day comment period prior to adoption. • Public comment opportunity at every TAC, and Policy Board meetings. 	

Programs

Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) Adoption/Update

The TIP is a program that identifies federally funded and regionally significant projects funded by non-federal sources that will be implemented each year. Projects include roadway improvements, new roadways, public transportation, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, project feasibility, and environmental studies. Projects in the TIP must have a secured source of funding. All projects in the TIP must first appear in the long-range transportation plan.

When a new or updated TIP is proposed a public meeting will be held to allow the public access to the document, the purpose and process. At this public meeting, the purpose and the process is explained, materials distributed, schedules outlined, and questions answered.

Public Notice of the meeting will be made through newspaper publication. Notices to the stakeholders, local government, and organizations with an interest in transportation issues will also be made.

The following is the minimum activity required to adopt a new or updated Program/Plan for the MPO.

Legal Notice

A legal notice shall be printed in a newspaper of countywide circulation and existing local newspapers. Notices shall be sent to the Clerk's office of all effected government agency offices for public posting.

Comment Period and Public Meeting

The first opportunity for public involvement is a comment and review period held simultaneously with a public information meeting. Opportunity for public comment on the plan shall also be provided at every TAC, Coordinating Committee, and Policy Board meeting during the comment period. Copies of the proposed document will be available for review by the public at the MPO offices and electronically via the Internet.

Summary and Disposition of Comments

A summary of significant comments and the disposition of the comments shall be presented to the TAC and MPO and will also be included in the final document.

The second opportunity for public involvement begins after the project applications have been received, and go to the TAC. The TAC holds an open meeting, evaluates and ranks the projects, and makes recommendations to the Policy Board. Project sponsors and the public may address the TAC.

The third opportunity for public involvement begins a 14-day public comment period with the distribution of the draft TIP to the MPO. The MPO policy body will host a proposed TIP workshop at a regularly scheduled meeting. Public notice is provided in the local newspapers, website postings with online and printed comment forms, notices to cities and organizations, and copies of the draft TIP are distributed to public libraries and stakeholders in the City of Wichita and Sedgwick and Butler Counties.

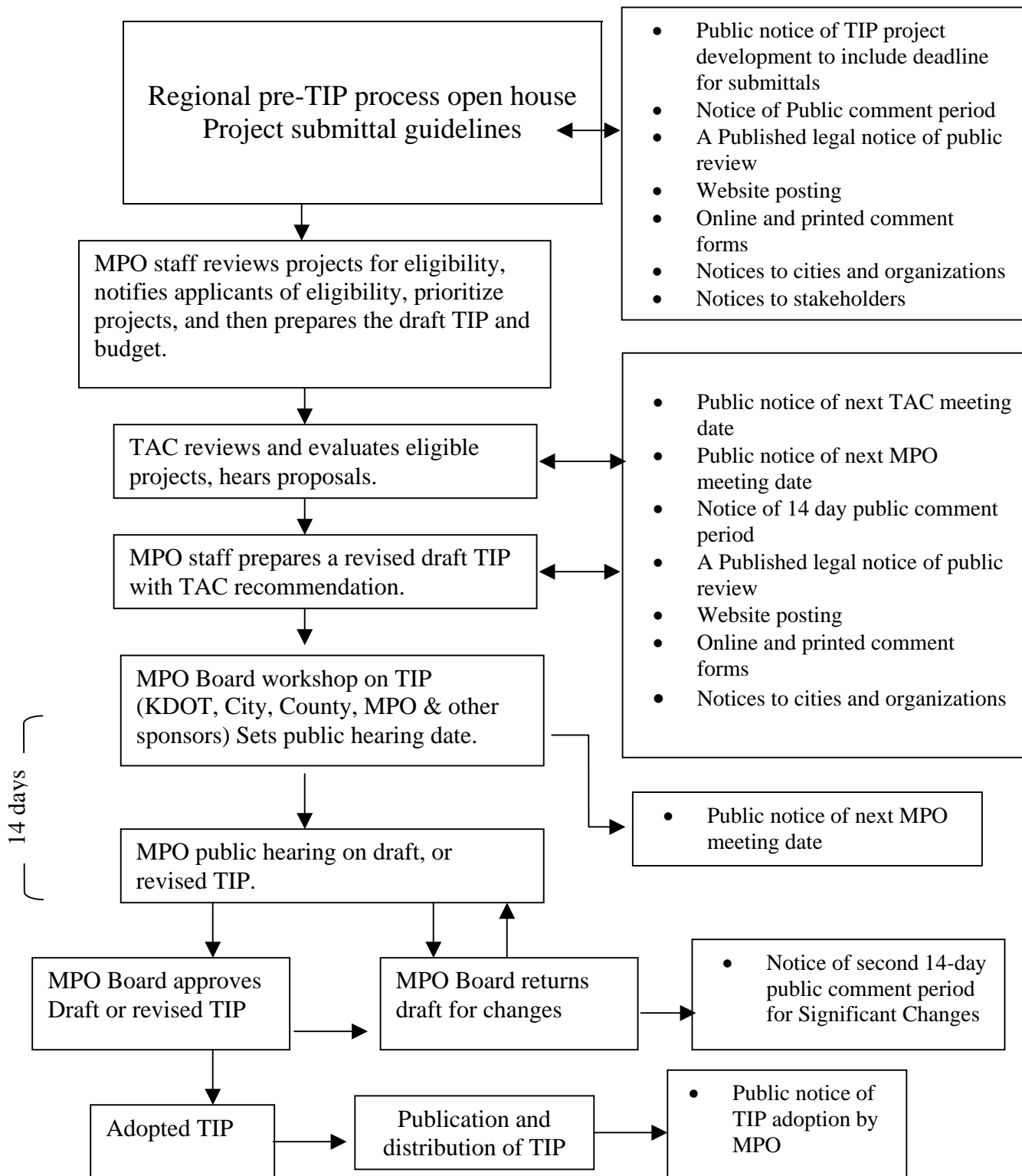
The MPO shall allow 14 days for public comments and shall hold a public information meeting during this 14-day period. Additional opportunities for public comment on the plan shall also be provided at every Transportation Advisory Committee, and Policy Board meeting during the comment period.

A summary of the comments and recommendations from the public comment period are included in the information provided to the MPO Board that also holds a public hearing at a regularly scheduled meeting. The MPO Board then determines that the TIP may be adopted as is, or modified.

If significant modifications are to be included, the document returns to a second public comment period before re-submittal to the MPO Board. If the proposed TIP is approved, adoption is then scheduled for the next MPO Board meeting.

The following flow chart demonstrates the sequence of events for TIP adoption or update.

TIP Flowchart



Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Adoption/Update

The UPWP is the annual budget for the MPO. The UPWP identifies the work tasks the MPO intends to perform over the next fiscal year and allocates the necessary funds to accomplish those tasks.

The creation of a new or updated UPWP starts with an initial public meeting involving KDOT, Transit operators, and the MAPD.

The MAPD starts with an initial draft of the proposed UPWP containing activities that have been identified as priority by stakeholders and are necessary to accomplish the comprehensive planning objectives of the MPO. USDOT, KDOT, Transit, and MAPD review the UPWP and provide comments and recommendations. The draft UPWP along with the budget is presented to the TAC and the public for review. A legal notice is published along with website posting, and printed comment forms. Notices are also addressed to the cities and organizations interested in transportation related issues.

The TAC recommendations along with the public comments during the period are then presented at the MPO workshop for review of the proposed UPWP. Revisions if any are then made to the proposed UPWP document.

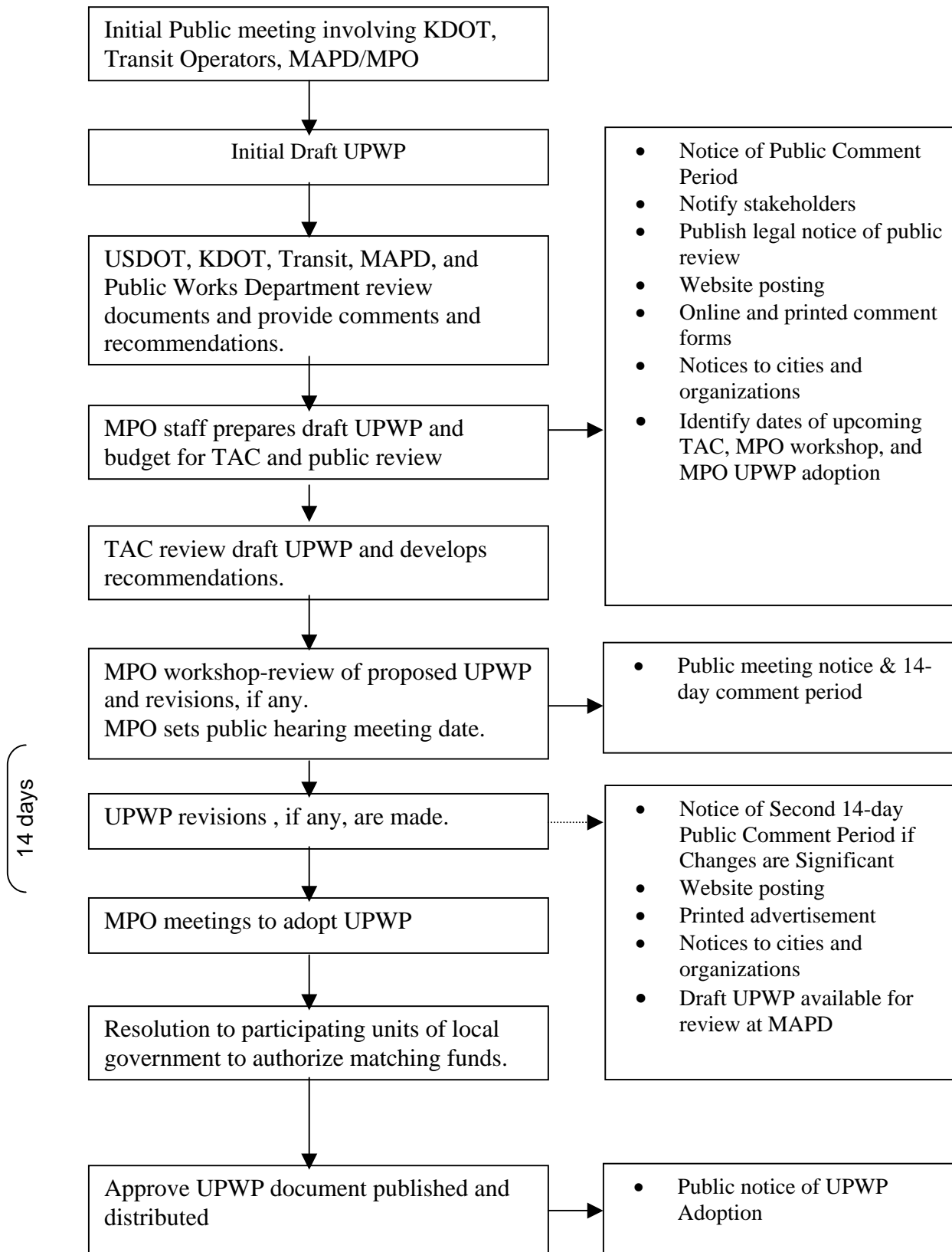
The MPO shall allow 14 days for public comments and shall hold a public information meeting during this 14-day period. Additional opportunities for public comment on the document shall also be provided at Transportation Advisory Committee, and Policy Board meeting during the comment period.

A summary of the comments and recommendations from the public comment period will be included in the information provided to the MPO Board that also holds a public hearing at a regularly scheduled meeting. The MPO Board then determines that the UPWP may be adopted as is, or modified.

If no significant changes are made, the MPO adopts the proposed UPWP at the next meeting.

The following flow chart demonstrates the sequence of events for UPWP adoption or update.

UPWP Flowchart



Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

The LRTP, updated every five years, provides the public with the opportunity to give input on a broad range of transportation issues. Projects listed in the LRTP are intended to meet transportation needs in the metropolitan area for at least the next 20 years. The plan addresses elements including congestion management, transit, bicycles and pedestrians, roadways, freight, and finances.

A public involvement process will be developed as part of the initiative to update the LRTP. The process shall include a proactive public involvement process that provides complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and supports early and continuing involvement of the public in developing LRTP. As a minimum, the MPO will provide a 14-day review period for the final draft of the LRTP. The MPO will provide 14 days for public comments and will hold a public informational meeting during the 14-day period. Opportunity for public comments shall also be available at every Transportation Advisory Committee, Coordinating Committee, and Policy Board meeting during the comment period.

Public Notice of the pending update to the LRTP is made through the City of Wichita, Sedgwick and Butler County official newspaper publications, websites, notices to the stakeholders, and interested cities, and organizations. The LRTP will be available to the public for review at designated public libraries, the MPO office and upon request.

Environmental Justice

Increasing concern over disproportionately high and adverse effects on environmental impacts of federally funded programs and projects on minority and low-income populations has prompted a DOT order directly addressing this issue. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was the impetus for the DOT order, assuring nondiscrimination based on race, color, and national origin.

Projects and programs should consider benefits to traditionally underserved populations from transportation decisions whenever possible. Planning and programming activities that have the potential to have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on human health or the environment shall include explicit consideration of the effects on minority populations and low-income populations. Procedures shall be established or expanded, as necessary, to provide meaningful opportunities for public involvement by members of minority populations and low-income populations during the planning and development of programs, policies, and activities.

The MPO will develop a demographic profile for the metropolitan area, identifying the geographic locations having large proportions of low-income, minority, elderly, and “mobility-impaired” populations.

Public notices shall be placed in publications whose audience is the traditionally under-served community.

Public forums, such as the District Advisory Boards (DAB’s), neighborhood organizations, and town council meetings can be used to promote public participation and present MPO plans and information on the planning processes.

The MPO will establish a contact database of organizations and individuals to receive informational mailings and announcements.

Americans with Disabilities

Acknowledging that ADA requires specific participation activities—particularly for paratransit plans, the MPO will initiate the following activities to promote public participation in the planning process:

- Outreach (developing contacts, mailing lists, and other means of notification for participation).
- Consultation with organizations and individuals with disabilities.
- Opportunity for public comment.
- Accessible formats.
- Public hearings.
- Summaries of significant issues raised during the public comment period.
- Ongoing efforts to involve the disabled community in planning.

Public meetings shall be held in locations that are accessible to people with physical disabilities and served by public transportation.

Special accommodations for translation and other special needs will be made with advanced notice.

Notification for public comment and participation activities

The MPO shall hold an open house for public review of the draft LRTP, TIP, and MIS/Corridor plans, to include the KDOT, City and County Public Works staff, public transit staff, and MPO staff, to answer questions, take comments and recommendations, provide schedules for meetings, and provide information and materials on public involvement as they become available.

The MPO shall post documents and schedules on the MPO website, currently accessible through the City and County Planning Department site. This site shall also have comment forms that may be filled out online, and emailed to the MPO. Drafts of plans will be provided to public libraries for the comment period.

A draft of a plan shall be provided to the clerk's office of local governments for display, upon request. Advanced notices will be sent to these offices for posting of meetings, scheduled events, and deadlines.

Public involvement participants and interested parties

MPO staff will maintain an ongoing master contact database, to be used in facilitating the distribution of information on public involvement activities, upcoming events, and schedules.

Contents of the database may be composed of any of the following:

- Civic and neighborhood organizations
- Coordinated Transit District # 12
- Disabled populations
- Elected officials
- Emergency response organizations
- Human service agencies
- Local, State, and Federal transportation agencies
- Low-income populations
- Media
- Military installations
- Minority populations

- Paratransit transportation agencies both private and public
- Private sector transportation and development firms
- Public transit agencies such as Wichita Transit
- Regulatory agencies
- Senior populations and organizations
- Tourism related organizations

Public Access

The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) staff is available to discuss technical and policy information with citizens and other interested parties during normal business hours. By prior arrangement, members of the MPO staff will meet with outside groups after normal business working hours.

The MPO maintains a library of past and current transportation planning studies and materials available for review during normal business hours. Copies of materials are available at reproduction and postage costs.

Copies of final documents and major updates of the Transportation Improvement Program and the Long Range Transportation Plan are forwarded to area public libraries for public review.

Public Involvement Techniques

This section contains descriptions of public involvement tools that may be used by the MPO. This listing is not all-inclusive and these activities may be reviewed for effectiveness as outlined in the PIP Policy document. At that time they may be revised to improve effectiveness in the public involvement process.

MPO Web Site

The MPO site is currently located on the City of Wichita website, under the Planning Department. Future location of the website could be under this or another existing website, or may be an independent website. The website can be used for information dissemination, feedback, and as a performance measure of effectiveness based on the number of visits in a certain time frame, or for a specific issue.

MPO Master Database

MPO staff may maintain an ongoing master database of all contacts, both business and public. The database may include committee membership, mailing information, phone and fax numbers, and e-mail and Internet addresses. The database could be used for maintaining up-to-date committee membership lists, special interest groups and homeowners or neighborhood association contacts, and the newsletter mailing list. The database will could be used to establish and maintain a list of e-mail contacts for electronic meeting notification and announcements.

Legal Advertisements

The MPO regularly should advertise the MPO, the TAC, and CCT meetings. The ads would identify complete meeting information on subject, dates, and times and the website that carries the full text of the meetings, and contact information. Ads will be placed in sections of the paper that will be readily seen by the general public.

MPO Newsletter

MPO Staff produces a newsletter distributed by request. Opportunities to request addition to the list occur

during public meetings hosted by the MPO, on the MPO web site, and when citizens contact MPO staff. Each issue of the newsletter includes staff contact information, upcoming meeting schedules, the MPO web site address, project highlights, and current planning project status reports.

Display Ads

These ads are used to promote meetings that are not regularly scheduled, such as corridor study workshops. They are published in the sections of the newspaper other than the section usually carrying legal ads.

Project-specific Flyers

For individual projects, such as corridor studies, that are typically performed using consulting services, informational flyers are often used to address specific project issues. These flyers can be mailed to targeted residents, businesses and property owners in the area that may be affected by a particular study.

Direct Mailings

This method may be used to announce upcoming meetings or activities or to provide information to a targeted area or group of people. Direct mailings are usually post cards, but can be letters or fliers.

Press Releases

Formal press releases are sent to local media (newspaper, TV and radio) to announce upcoming meetings and activities and to provide information on specific issues being considered by the MPO.

TV Message Board Announcements

Information about regular MPO, TAC, CCT meetings, and other public meetings can be presented through scrolling announcements on public broadcast or cable television channels.

Project Workshops/Open-Houses

These public meetings are generally open and informal. Typically project team members interact with the public on a one-on-one basis. Presentations may be given at these meetings. The purpose of project-specific meetings is to provide project information to the public and to solicit public comment.

Small Group Meetings

During projects such as planning studies, meetings are held with small groups that have an interest in the project. Meetings could be with homeowners or neighborhood associations, civic groups, special interest groups, or other groups of affected or interested parties. An example could be the DAB meetings.

E-mail Contact

Meeting announcements and MPO information is e-mailed to interested persons that have submitted their e-mail addresses to MPO staff.

Citizen's Advisory Committees

Local Citizen's Advisory Committees (CAC) may be formed for MPO planning studies to provide input from citizens representing potentially affected areas or special interest groups (roughly equivalent to the DABS).

Elected officials in the study area usually appoint members of the CAC. Representatives of neighborhoods or groups with a vested interest are encouraged to be members of the CAC along with representatives of traditionally under served groups. Typically, the CAC meets several times throughout a study in consultation with MPO and DOT staff.

Fact Sheets

These are used to provide summary information regarding MPO policy, programs and projects. Fact sheets can be distributed at public meetings, on the MPO web site, and in public places such as libraries and community centers. Individuals and special interest groups can request fact sheets directly from the MPO office.

Public Hearings

These are public meetings used to solicit public comment on a project or issue being considered by the MPO. Hearings provide a formal setting for citizens to provide comments to the MPO or another decision-making body. They are formal in nature and are recorded and transcribed for the record.

Comment Forms

Comment forms can be used to solicit public comment on specific issues presented at a workshop or other public meeting. Comment forms can be very general in nature, or can ask for very specific feedback.

Comment forms can also be included in publications to solicit input regarding the subject of the publication and/or the format of the publication.

Surveys

Surveys may be conservatively used, when very specific input from the public is desired. A survey can be used in place of comment forms to ask very specific questions such as whether a person supports a specific alignment in a corridor study. Surveys may also be used to gather technical data during corridor and planning studies.

Posters and Flyers

Posters and flyers are used to announce meetings and events and are distributed to public places such as City Halls, libraries, and community centers for display. The announcement may contain a brief description of the purpose of the meeting, the time(s) and location(s), and contact information. Posters and flyers may be used to reach a large audience that cannot be reached using direct mailings and/or newsletters.